

enable the NASA Administrator to identify those elements of NASA that are crucial to its future and then empower the President to work with Congress on those bureaucratic adjustments deemed necessary to bring the agency into line with national priorities. Our bill complements the intention of the VA/ HUD/ Independent Agencies Appropriations Subcommittee to have the NASA Administrator report his intentions for bureaucratic streamlining to Congress prior to any action, but does not empower the Administrator to close any NASA field centers without first studying the implications of and seeking congressional approval for such an action.

In the end, this bill will help us build a new NASA that once again can lead the United States into a sound economic and technological future.

TRIBUTE TO THE CITY OF  
BLAKESLEE ON THE OCCASION  
OF ITS 100TH ANNIVERSARY

**HON. PAUL E. GILLMOR**

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, July 18, 1995*

Mr. GILLMOR. Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to rise today and pay tribute to an exceptional city located in Ohio's Fifth Congressional District. This year, the city of Blakeslee, will celebrate the 100th anniversary of its founding.

Blakeslee is located in Williams County in northwest Ohio. The area has a rich history dating back to earliest settlements in the Ohio Territory. Its position above the St. Joseph River made it a favorite for pioneers traveling West. The city itself dates from its incorporation in 1895.

Today, Blakeslee is a community renowned for its civic pride and commitment to service. Throughout its history there has never been a lack of enthusiasm or volunteer labor for its many projects. The citizens have continually displayed the Ohio tradition of neighborliness and caring for others.

Mr. Speaker, anniversaries are a time to reflect upon past accomplishments. They are also a time to look toward new horizons. I ask my colleagues to join me today in recognizing the history and achievements of the city of Blakeslee and encouraging its citizens to continue to uphold its impressive legacy.

JAPAN APOLOGIZES TO COMFORT  
WOMEN

**HON. PATRICIA SCHROEDER**

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, July 18, 1995*

Mrs. SCHROEDER. Mr. Speaker, during World War II, the Japanese military was quite brutal in its conquests. They raped and pillaged their way across Asia. At some point the Japanese became concerned that the rapes would provoke a backlash against Japanese troops. Therefore, the military established comfort stations, wherever they went—from the Korean peninsula to the Burmese mountains—to provide sexual services to their soldiers. Over 100,000 young women, mostly Ko-

rean, were taken from their homes and forced to serve in these camps as comfort women. They were repeatedly raped, often by dozens of soldiers per day.

As a result of their bondage, many suffer long-term effects of venereal diseases and psychological disorders. In these cultures, rape and prostitution carry such a stigma, that many of the comfort women may never come forward due to the shame associated with the degradation. Those who came forward did so after many years and risked ostracism by their families to do so.

Until 5 years ago, Japan flat out denied the existence of these comfort women. Even after 1992, when they owned up to these war crimes, the Japanese Government denied any legal responsibility to the women involved. Last week, however, Japanese Prime Minister Tomiichi Murayama reached out to these women, announcing that Japan will send official letters of apology to the surviving Korean victims, make financial reparations, and provide medical care for the abuse that they endured. I commend the Japanese Government for taking such strong action on behalf of these women. I hope that Japan's acknowledgement of their responsibility will aid the healing for the victims.

JAPAN TO APOLOGIZE TO "COMFORT WOMEN"—  
PRIME MINISTER PLANS LETTER TO WWII  
VICTIMS

(By T.R. Reid)

TOKYO.—Facing serious political trouble in a national election 10 days away, Japan's pacifist Prime Minister Tomiichi Murayama has made a daring decision: He plans to send official letters expressing "humble apologies" to hundreds of victims of Japanese brutality during World War II.

Chief Cabinet Secretary Kozo Igarashi said the unusual plan would be announced next week—just before the July 23 election for the upper house of the national Diet, or parliament—as part of a broader plan of aid and compensation for so-called "comfort women" in several Asian nations.

"Comfort women" is the term used here to describe the hundreds of thousands of women who were forced to serve as sex slaves for Japanese soldiers fighting in various Asian nations during the war. About 800 to 1,000 of these women are believed to be alive today, and each one will receive a personal letter from the prime minister, Igarashi said, as well as cash and medical care.

If Asian nations accept the step as a sincere Japanese apology, the letters might help alleviate lingering bitterness toward Japan in the region. The forced prostitution—which Japan has only acknowledged in the past five years—is one of the cruelest memories of Japan's harsh colonial rule over much of east Asia in the 1940s.

In domestic political terms, though, the move is a gamble, because any form of apology for World War II has proven controversial here.

But it is something Murayama—long a bitter critic of Japan's aggression in the war—believes in personally. And the prime minister is in such hot water politically that a dramatic move may be worth a try.

The coming election will choose 126 members of the Diet's upper house. Because the upper house has only limited powers, the elections for half its seats every three years are often meaningless. For Murayama, however, this one could prove momentous.

Polls and pundits suggest that Murayama's Socialist Party could lose up to three-quarters of the 41 seats it has at stake. In normal times, Japanese political tradition would de-

mand that the chairman of the losing party resign to take responsibility. And if Murayama were to step down as party leader, he would give up the prime minister's spot as well.

Even if voting day turns into disaster for the Socialists, Murayama might avoid the worst-case scenario. The grandfatherly 71-year-old heads an unlikely liberal-conservative coalition government. The parties can't seem to agree on a possible replacement, so Murayama clings to his job despite meager approval ratings.

Still, a big loss on election day would presumably weaken him even more.

There are some 20 parties competing in the election campaign. They range from major political forces like the Liberal Democratic Party—the most conservative of the major parties—and the reform-minded New Frontier Party to tiny, ad hoc groupings such as the UFO Party, the Refreshing New Party and the Sports and Peace Party, headed by a pro wrestler.

The campaign has failed to grab the attention of the public; voter apathy is so broad that many experts think the turnout will drop below 50 percent for the first time in a national election.

All parties seem to be presenting similar, if vague, plans to revive the sputtering economy. The issue agenda is so blank that more than two dozen of the candidates around the country are TV, movie or sports personalities hoping to trade on their famous names.

In those circumstances, it could make good political sense for Murayama to offer his bold proposal on the comfort women.

Igarashi said the government will announce next week the creation of a fund-raising campaign called "The Asian Peace and Friendship Fund for Women," which will collect private donations plus government money to provide compensation and treatment for any survivor of the sex-slave plaintiffs.

When these funds are distributed to the surviving comfort women, they will be sent with a letter, signed by the prime minister, expressing "humble apologies" for the suffering the Imperial Japanese Army caused the women half a century ago. The apology, Igarashi said, will be expressed in highly respectful, subservient language—a linguistic form of groveling.

The proposal for a fund-raising campaign was set forth tentatively last month. Some of the surviving women praised the idea, as did the government of South Korea, the nation where the largest number of survivors live. Others said the plan was inadequate.

But the idea of a personal letter from Japan's head of state has not been broached here previously. Igarashi revealed it today in a meeting with foreign reporters. His goal may be to have the proposal for a "humble apology" letter reported widely overseas, giving the letter some quality of a fait accompli.

But Murayama and his political advisers may have decided that a battle with conservatives on this point could be a political plus in the days before the national election.

Last month, when Murayama pushed for passage of a formal parliamentary resolution of "deep remorse" for Japan's aggression, his efforts seemed to shore up his standing with the public. Although veterans' groups and nationalist conservatives are bitterly opposed, opinion polls here repeatedly show that most people agree Japan should apologize for its role in the war.

The need for an apology is more broadly accepted in the case of the comfort women than for other Japanese actions. But there are still some politicians who say Japan's use of sex slaves was not different from what other armies tend to do.